



MONTANA LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

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DATE: Tuesday, May 13, 2008

TO: Legislative Finance Committee

FROM: Cathy Duncan, Senior Fiscal Analyst, Legislative Fiscal Division

RE: LRP Working Group: FWP Capital Project Appropriation Status

The following report presents a summary of the discussions and actions of the latest LRP working group meeting. There will not be a formal presentation of this information at the Legislative Finance Committee meeting of June 5th and 6th. If you have questions concerning this report, please feel free to contact me at (406) 444-4580.

The Long-Range Planning (LRP) working group met in a conference call on April 28, 2008 to review the status of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks (FWP) capital project appropriations. The conference call was attended by Sen. Schmidt, Rep. Kasten, and Rep. Sesso. Also in attendance was FWP Director Jeff Hagener and LFD, OBPP, and FWP staff.

The working group was made aware of large unexpended appropriation balances in FWP capital projects. The discussions of the meeting concentrated on the reasons for the outstanding balances and issues related to the classification of certain FWP projects as "capital projects". The analysis uncovered many appropriation balances that could be reverted. FWP staff also explained that certain balances were related to ongoing projects, and two projects were identified that do not qualify as "capital projects". Additional questions were raised concerning whether the numerous FWP grants programs could be considered "capital projects", given that the grants fund projects on non-state owned properties.

The LRP working group made the following recommendations and decisions for staff action:

- o Revert project appropriations that have been completed or will not go forward
- o Move the "Fishing Access Site" maintenance project to the general appropriations act
- o Move the bird release component of "Upland Game Bird Program" to the general appropriations act
- o Investigate the ability to place sunsets on capital projects
- o Investigate alternative methods of handling of FWP grants programs
- o Investigate better methods for reflecting appropriation amounts on future status reports

The information distributed to the working group and the minutes of the April 28, 2008 meeting can be found on the LFD website by following the "Long-Range Planning Working Group" link. LRP working group members decided to meet again in November, after election but before caucus, to receive an update on the recommended actions and decisions.